

:: TEARFUL GOODBYE ::
Diane Hammond, the wife of Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division, hugs Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Inf. Div., as they board a plane bound for Kuwait February 29 at Fort Hood's Robert Gray Army Airfield.

Raider Family Strong equals U.S. Army Strong

» They are the steady hand which cares for our children, maintains the home, pays the bills and supports the community.

1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Today, more than ever before, the U.S. Army Family remains a cornerstone to the success of a strong, relevant military. The hard work, dedication and sacrifices made daily by the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, does not stop with the men and women deployed in support of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all Raider Families and friends, who silently serve their nation's call from home at Fort Hood, Texas, and across America. Your sacrifices cannot be measured. Although the challenges of deployment are great for our Soldiers, it does not escape me that the greater challenge remains with our spouses at home. They are the steady hand which cares for our children, maintains the home, pays the bills and supports the community. This list goes on and on – all while, in many cases, maintaining a career of their own! Your love, support and understanding are the foundation to the accomplishment of our mission.

Equally as important and absolutely essential to our success



:: FAMILY SUPPORT :: Family members and friends joined Soldiers and leaders of the Rear Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, to take a "Walk to Iraq and Back" March 29 at Fort Hood, Texas.

are the Raider Family Readiness Groups. Simply stated, they are the backbone of the Raider rear detachment and Family support system.

Their tireless efforts and dedication to commutation, assistance, comfort and the reception and welcoming of our newly arrived Families remains a combat multiplier and improves the quality of life for all our Soldiers and their Families. You will always have my deepest and heartfelt appreciation for all you do.

The Raider Brigade remains proud of the commitment and the hard work of the Army Family, and we will continue to strive for excellence in all that we do. Thank you for all that you do to keep us committed to the fight.



Webcams, video teleconferences, phone calls keep Families strong during Striker's deployment

3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Family is the cornerstone on which all the success the Striker Brigade has enjoyed is built.

Soldiers, whether deployed or home, married or single, all have a Family. When a Soldier is separated from that base, 15 months can seem like an eternity.

To combat the long time Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infan-

try Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, will spend away from their Families, leaders made several options available.

Monthly video teleconferences were set up for Soldiers to see and interact with Families at Fort Carson, Colo. Despite the vast time difference, many Soldiers braved the early morning wake up for the chance to see babies grow and loved ones smile.

Additionally, Col. John Hort and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Dailey conducted periodic town hall meetings to keep friends and Family of the Striker Brigade informed of events on this side of the world.

Some Family members were able to reunite in Iraq.

An Army father and an Air Force son were able to gather for a few days at Forward Operating Base War Eagle and countless other Family members kept in contact via



WEDDING VOWS Pfc. Donald Pope (right), a Daleville, Ala., native, says his vows to the former Laura Tomblin of Tifton, Ga., during a wedding ceremony conducted via telephone from Forward Operating Base Callahan to Georgia Sept. 12.

an improved Internet connection and Web cams.

One Soldier, Pfc. Donald Pope, even found time to get married while deployed to Iraq.

"We didn't want to wait," said the Dalesville, Ala., native, who serves as a fire support specialist with 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Pope and his new bride, the former Laura Tomblin, were married Sept. 12 via telephone from his base in northern Baghdad.

This was a trying 15-months, but with the stoic support of the Families, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.'s Striker Soldiers, were able to accomplish the mission and return home with honor.



FAMILY SERVICE Chaplain (Capt.) Aaron Swartz, a Lexington, Ill., native, shares a laugh with his son, Senior Airman Brian Harding, a native of Janesville, Wis., during Harding's visit to Forward Operating Base War Eagle in northern Baghdad Aug. 23.

Soldiers, Families stay connected during deployment

“FRGs are important to keeping Soldiers focused on the mission at hand,” said Song Getchell, an FRG advisor, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Inf. Regt. “They assist Family members with minor problems and connect them with the services required to solve big problems, all so the Soldier can concentrate on the mission.”

2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

Often, when Soldiers are notified they will deploy and are asked to leave their Families behind for more than a year's time, it can be a difficult adjustment and even a heart-wrenching affair.

When the Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), set off on their deployment to northwest Baghdad in October 2007, they left behind their brothers, their sisters, husbands, wives, mothers, fathers and children; however, they also left behind an organized group set in place to help care for those loved ones. This group is known as a Family Readiness Group.

Family Readiness Groups are organizations of people who support and care for Soldiers and their Families, said Rachel McLamb, an FRG advisor for the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, or “First Strike.” It allows a group of people an opportunity to connect while sharing like circumstances and a common purpose.

“An FRG is a conduit of information from the military command and community,” McLamb added.

For Lydia Gittings, an FRG advisor with the 1st Bn., 502nd Inf. Regt., the FRG is a vehicle in which accurate information is disseminated to Family members. It is a place where these Family members can turn to find resources in difficult times.

The main responsibilities of an FRG are helping connect Families to Army services and assisting with the flow of information between the unit, rear detachment and Family members, said Song Getchell, an FRG advisor for the brigade's 2nd Battalion, 502nd Inf. Regt.

“The FRG is composed of volunteers, many with extensive experience with Army services,” said Getchell. “These experienced volunteers help connect less experienced Family members to service providers.”

With a spouse deployed, Family members may run into an assortment of problems, whether dealing with pay or housing,

and bothering their spouse would be the last thing they would want to do as they continue the counter-insurgency battle.

“FRGs are important to keeping Soldiers focused on the mission at hand,” Getchell continued. “They assist Family members with minor problems and connect them with the services required to solve big problems, all so the Soldier can concentrate on the mission.”

According to Lauren Bolen, an FRG advisor for the 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, during regular get-togethers, the spouses focused on enjoying each other's company. They often discuss child care, recipes or coping techniques, really anything to help them cope with the absence of their loved ones.

They maintain contact between Soldiers and Family members through different methods as well. Commanders on the ground provide FRGs with a monthly update letter, while rear detachment commanders provide weekly updates on FRG activities to forward based commanders.

“We keep our Families involved in a variety of ways. We conduct our monthly call down on the first Thursday of the month,” said Bolen.

“We also hold regular FRG meetings to help pass along information. We hold get-togethers that are pure fun with no agenda that often end up being informative.”

Wendy Hermeling, an FRG advisor for the 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, said they have worked hard to ensure solid communication with the Families by updating contact information through monthly telephonic call downs.

Through regularly scheduled meetings, they are able to get together and give people a chance to talk and maybe ask questions, voice their concerns and share information and ideas, Hermeling said.



CONNECTING HOME :: Sgt. 1st Class John Nagy, a native of Clarksville, Tenn., talks with his fiancé back at Fort Campbell, Ky., during a Mother's Day Video Teleconference from Camp Liberty May 11.

:: FRIENDLY SMILE :: Pvt. Benjamin Raulerson, a Jacksonville, Ala., native, with 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, talks to a child while on patrol in Taji.



Warrior Ohana

2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div

The Warriors of the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, embody the Family spirit.

While the Warrior Brigade and its home station, Schofield Barracks, are on the furthest distances on the Earth, the spirit of Ohana transcends both time and space.

The Hawaiian Islands are 13 time zones away and some 8,000 miles distant with night being day and day being night from one location to the other. Despite this, the ability to reach back to Families and friends is a common occurrence.

Families have engaged in the “Walk to Iraq and Back” by logging miles at the Schofield Barracks track. To date, the Family Readiness Groups have logged in more than 24 thousand miles, that’s equal to a full walk around the globe, so they have accomplished the Walk to Iraq and Back ... and then to Iraq again. The group plans to keep walking until the Warriors are back

home.

Families have been able to reach their Soldiers through video-teleconferences that are offered by Schofield Barracks. Soldiers have waited their turns to get their precious minutes to see their loved ones from across two oceans and two continents. There have also been the rear detachment video town hall meetings, where senior leaders are there to talk issues and current activities of the Warrior Brigade.

The Warriors have used a unique program to read to their children using the “United Through Reading” program. This provides a personal time, where the Soldier links to his younger children by reading a story that is being video recorded. The DVD is sent off for the child to see his Soldier and share the joy of reading.

Organizations have generously given to the brigade in efforts to bring their Ohana to the Warriors.

The Gathering of Eagles organization started the efforts through “Operation Warrior Wake-Up,” which donated Kona

coffee and French-press coffee makers as well as numerous resupply shipments. The wide-eyed Warriors are certainly appreciative of this effort.

Numerous groups and organizations have reached to the brigade, providing everything from stationary to candies, school supplies, books and soccer balls. Those gifts are presented to the Iraqi schools and children, whose future is enhanced with every bit of charity to assist their recovery from long years of going without essential supplies.

Through combined medical efforts, healthcare is provided to the needy Iraqis by assisting Iraqi doctors.

The Warrior Family, both here and back in Hawaii, have reached across the distances and time to ensure Ohana is alive and well.

The Warriors are taking that Family spirit that has been embodied here and giving it to the Iraqis in the open compassion that is Family, the Warrior Family, Ohana.



:: KONA CARE :: Sgt. Joseph Gillette, a native of Aurora, Colo., proudly displays Kona coffee donated by Hawai’ian coffee farmers before leaving on mission. The Hawai’i chapter of Gathering of Eagles donated home-grown coffee from the Kona region on Big Island of Hawai’i.

A Family Affair: Respect

:: HAPPY COUPLE :: Newly promoted Capt. Erica Chabalko smiles as she receives her first salute from her husband, 1st Lt. Justin Chabalko, near the Tigris River June 19.

Patriot Brigade keeps Families informed, supports Soldier-Family ties

4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

Keeping Patriot Brigade Families informed about their deployed Soldiers was a priority of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light), leadership during Operation Iraqi Freedom 07-09.

Col. Mark Dewhurst, commander, 4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (L), personally approved and oversaw the development of products featuring Patriot Brigade Soldiers on a virtual Family Readiness Group Web site.

One Soldier was primarily dedicated to taking pictures and producing articles about life on a forward operating base because of the importance the brigade commander placed on keeping Families informed. In addition to the FOB life highlights, a different Soldier feature story was produced every week. Other postings on the vFRG Web site included Multi-National Division – Baghdad-released articles, a photo gallery and the Patriot Magazine, which was published every other month for a total of six issues.

The Patriot Brigade invited Family members to attend events back home live via video teleconferencing. Examples were Headquarters change of commands and the frocking of three majors to lieutenant colonel, after which one-on-one time between Soldiers and their loved ones was available and encouraged.

Also, brigade leaders brought Soldiers together with their deployed relatives, including a brother and sister conducting a media interview, a brother promoting his twin brother and a lieutenant colonel reenlisting his first cousin he had never met.



:: HOME MADE :: Lt. Col. Nathan Blood, brigade effects coordinator for 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, shares a high-five with his 16-month-old daughter, Mackenzie, during a Web camera communication.

Family: They go with you everywhere

18th MP Bde.

Throughout Iraq, Soldiers ready for missions on a daily basis. As they prepare for these missions, they go through countless rehearsals and equipment checks to make sure they are ready for anything the enemy prepares to dish out.

The one item people do not see on the inventory checklist that all Soldiers seem to carry is a photo or trinket from a loved one back home.

"I take a piece of them with me everywhere I go," said Sgt. Juan Rodriguez, a member of the 18th Military Police Brigade's personnel security detachment, referring to his wife and four children.

Rodriguez, like many Soldiers, carries pictures of his Family in his wallet when he goes on missions in Iraq as a symbol of good luck, along with several other good luck charms he was given before leaving for his deployment.

"I carry a tooth and a dollar bill that two of my daughters gave me before I deployed," said Rodriguez.

"I keep something from all of them in my wallet."

Spc. Jajuan Boyd, a fellow member of the detachment, keeps a picture of his 4-year-old daughter in his left breast

pocket when he goes out on mission as a symbol of good luck and to remind him why he serves.

Family is the needed spirit that keeps Soldiers going during a long deployment.

"The spirit of the Family acts as a catalyst or stimulant to cheer a Soldier up when he or she is down and out," said Command Sgt. Maj. Bernard McPherson, 18th MP Bde. "It reminds us of who we really are, not Command Sgt. Maj. McPherson, but Dad."

:: SMALL COMFORTS :: Staff Sgt. Joseph Reinsburrow, 64th Military Police Company, a native of Towanda, Pa., holds an Iraqi child June 12 in Hurriyah, while Iraqi police and Coalition Forces hand out toys and school supplies to the local children. Soldiers always find a way to connect with Family one way or another while deployed in combat operations.

McPherson said, the memories of Family are what give Soldiers the motivation to continue on.

"The memories of being with the Family strengthen you to go out every single day and do your best," said McPherson.

During deployments, Soldiers always find a way to have the fellow Soldiers around them act as a Family away from home.

"You find yourself trying to create a similar closeness within the realm of standards, customs and traditions of the Army with those that are fighting with you," said McPherson.

:: COMMIT TOGETHER :: Sergeants Ryan and Erika Lowe, members of the 64th and 401st Military Police Companies respectively, reenlisted during a July 4 mass reenlistment ceremony at Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory in order to provide stability for their Family in the future.



926th Engineer Brigade bridges the gap between Family and Soldier



:: FAMILY TIES :: Sgt. Carmen Guerrero and Spc. Ramiro Guerrero, both of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, are the brother and sister of the 890th. This is their first deployment together, and they both serve in the battalion. Both are assigned to Headquarters Support Company, 890th Engineer Battalion, 926th Engineer Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

only ones, the 46th Engineer Battalion out of Fort Polk, La., and the 890th Engineer Battalion out of Gulf Port, Miss., supports the theme of Family.

The 46th Engineer Battalion out of Fort Polk, La., and the 890th Engineer Battalion out of Gulf Port, Miss., have a great sense of Family. Both battalions

have Family Readiness Groups that are actively participating in the morale of Soldiers. Newsletters are sent out monthly to the FRG teams back home so that Families stay informed.

The 890th Engineer Battalion has wonderful assistance from its Family Readiness Groups, friends and local communities. It has been adopted by its local Veterans of Foreign Wars, and because of this, Soldiers receive letters, care packages and snacks to support the unit. In return, the 890th Eng. Bn. sends out newsletters and emails back home to the VFW and Family to let them know that their hard work is appreciated. The 890th command holds video conferences with the FRG in order to talk and view Families.

The chaplain and his team also hold platoon bible studies for the Soldiers who have difficult times getting to church services.

There are many activities held for Family members back home. There are numerous FRG meetings held before and during the deployment and Organization Days for Soldiers and their Families.

Family involvement is the key to any Soldier's mission accomplishment and is the main tenet of the "Steel Spike Team."

926th Eng. Bde.

The 926th Engineer Brigade supports the 4th Infantry Division's theme of Family in three ways. The Soldiers and Families are supported by the brigade's Family Readiness Group, the Brigade Chaplain Team and the command group. As a reserve brigade, we depend upon our Families to help bridge the gap of Family and Soldier. Not all of the Soldiers within the brigade live in Alabama.

The 926th's FRG team is mainly out of Montgomery, Ala., and they assist Families in many ways. They complete monthly phone calls with Soldiers' Families and hold Family Readiness Group meetings at the reserve center to discuss various ways to support the troops. They also assist in developing coping mechanisms for first time Families of deployment. In addition, the FRG teams in the 926th's Headquarters and Headquarters Company set up video teleconferences. During the teleconferences, Soldiers talk and view their

Family members at the same time.

While in Iraq, the Chaplain team has collected school supplies for Iraqi children and conducted hip-pocket faith training for Soldiers in the 926th Eng. Bde. Lastly, the Chaplain's Team has Prayer Chains for Families.

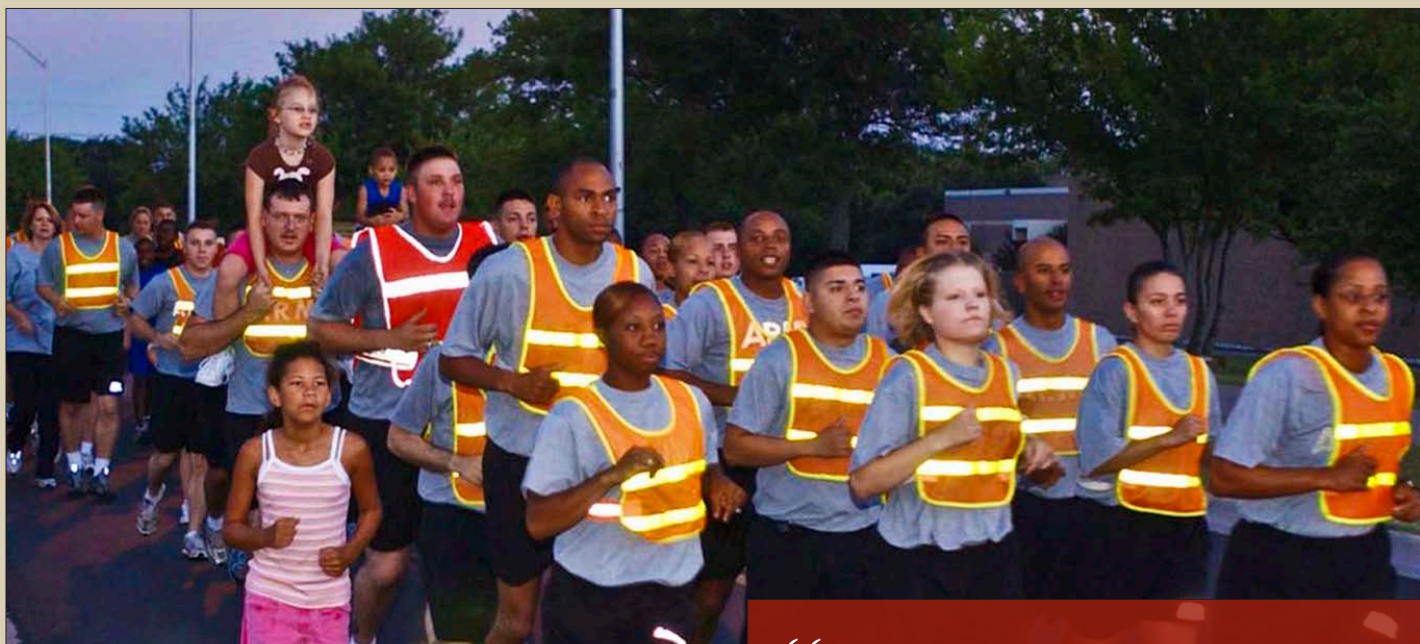
This is a unique chain where Soldiers and Families send an email to the chaplain and his team and request prayer. The 926th does many things to support the 4th Infantry Division's theme of Family, but we are not the



:: MAC GROUP :: Members of the 688th Mobility Augmentation Company (MAC) out of Harrison, Ark., are pictured here in August 26. The 688th is attached to the 890th Engineer Battalion, 926th Engineer Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

CAB Soldiers, Families are one team

CAB, 4th Inf. Div.



:: RUN TIME :: Soldiers and Family members from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, ran together during a Family Fun physical training session held on Fort Hood in 2007.

“From my experience, being part of the CAB itself makes the FRG unique,”

Kerrie Frederick,

FRG support assistant,
4th Bn., 4th Avn., Regt.

CAB, 4th Inf. Div.

When Soldiers and Families hear the news they will be separated for more than a year,

the planning begins.

For Soldiers of the Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division,

Multi-National Division – Baghdad, leaving behind their children, wives, husbands, parents and the Central Texas community, was a rough experience as Soldiers deployed in June 2008 to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Although the separation was tear-jerking, the community and the Families united in the accomplishment of the mission and the care of the Families.

For the Iron Eagle Brigade, it is one team and one fight.

“Everything we do as an FRG is based around the Family,” said Shannon McRae, brigade FRG representative from Austin, Texas.

“My job specifically is to train the FRG leaders at the battalion level to ensure our network of communications, support and outreach is available to every Family member,” she said.

Almost as if the FRG is suiting up and going to war with the Soldiers, FRG leaders and volunteers train, equip and prepare Families for long deployments.

“From my experience, being part of the CAB itself makes the FRG unique,” said Kerrie Frederick, FRG support assistant, 4th Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment.

“The CAB is a different sort of group all together. You listen to spouses from other units, and you soon realize that the CAB is unlike other brigades.

There is a sense of closeness among so many different (military occupation specialties) as well as ranks, and we all come together no matter our Soldier’s rank or job,” she said.



:: WARM UP :: Maj. Cort Andrews, plans and operations officer in charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, and his daughter, Kayla, 4, warm-up with the knee and ankle rotation.

TEAM

“Our Team is as diverse as our nation. We represent a true cross-section of our nation’s Army, with Active Duty, Reserve and National Guard Soldiers standing side-by-side as one force with our brothers in arms – our nation’s Sailors, Airmen and Marines – along with our civilian partners, both from the United States and abroad. Of course, the cement to our team is our Family members and community members back home whose unwavering support is the driving force for those of us serving in Iraq.

“Our Team is ‘Steadfast and Loyal’ in its mission. Along with another element of our Team, the Iraqi Security Forces, we are committed to safeguarding the Iraqi population.”

– Brig. Gen. Robin Swan
Pittsburgh, Pa.
Deputy Commanding General
4th Inf. Div. and MND-B



A group of Soldiers from the Personnel Security Detachment for Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, commanding general, 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, huddle together before a mission in Baghdad March 17.



Tough, realistic training

keeps Raider Soldiers at the front of the battlefield



:: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY :: Sgt. Franklin Myers, a combat engineer from Columbia, S.C., attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, points out various functions located on a Buffalo route-clearance vehicle to members of the Iraqi National Police June 16 at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Baghdad.

1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Led by a capable, trained and experienced corps of officers and noncommissioned officers, Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, continually strive to remain tactically and technically proficient while deployed to Forward Op-

erating Base Falcon in support of Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Whether in garrison, in the field or forward deployed – tough, realistic training is a critical element in ensuring the overall readiness for any unit in combat, and the Soldiers of the Raider

Brigade continue to hone their skills, building strong teams through challenging training, shared values and experience.

The Soldiers of the 1st BCT maintained accountability of their Soldiers and their equipment at all times, maintaining high standards of appearance and conduct to achieve a level of professionalism that is characteristic of a Raider Soldier and the 4th Inf. Div.

Incorporating the fundamentals of the “Ironhorse Big Eight” into every mission, the Soldiers of the Raider Brigade demonstrated a level of leadership, discipline and proficiency that remains the standard for operations today.

The Raider Brigade trained, mentored and coached their Iraqi Security Forces counterparts, leading by example to build and strengthen the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police and National Police during ongoing security operations in southern Baghdad.

The 1st BCT units simultaneously fostered professional military relationships within the Iraqi communities by working

with local leaders and citizens to maintain security and improve quality of life for the 1.6 million citizens of the Rashid district.

Upon completion of its third deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Soldiers of the Raider Brigade remain firm in purpose, resolute in task, unwavering in character and steadfast dependable in its answer to the Nation’s call.



:: OFFICE SPACE :: Capt. Dominick Curalli, general dentist, and Spc. Edward Cabanas, dental assistant, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, clean a Soldier's teeth at the Cobra Tactical Medical Clinic in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.



:: WAR GAMES :: Sgt. Kyle Lobdell, an armor crewmember assigned to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, traverses a flight of stairs in Urban Terrain training at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, March 20.



Building Team

Striker Soldiers partner up with Iraqi Army

:: COMMON DEFENSE :: 1st Lt. Dale Donaldson (left), a Bartlesville, Okla., native, turns to communicate with a policeman from the Ali-Salaam Iraqi Police station while conducting a joint patrol in Husseinia Feb. 26.

In combat operations in Sadr City, Iraqi Army Soldiers stood side-by-side with their 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad brothers-in-arms to quell the Special Groups Criminals as they tried to unseat the blossoming security in the Iraqi capital. That teamwork allowed Soldiers to quickly squash the uprising and return security and stability to the Iraqi capitals most volatile district.

3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Partnering with the Iraqi Security Forces is essential to successful missions for the Striker Brigade.

The Iraqi Army has built off the successes it enjoyed in Sadr City and continued to target a determined enemy. The 11th Iraqi Army Division, which operates in the Striker Brigade operational environment, has helped deplete the Special Groups arsenal through cache finds discovered through the relationship it has built with the people they protect.

In the months that followed the Sadr City uprising, the other branches of the Iraqi Security Forces, to include the Sons

of Iraq and Iraqi Police, have established themselves as an outlet to protect and assist the people.

Using supplies provided by Striker Soldiers, the Iraqi Security Forces are able to provide the Iraqi people with medical supplies, humanitarian aid packages, school supplies and other needed items.

Working together with their Iraqi partners, Striker Soldiers have been able to build an environment where the Iraqi people are able to build a growing economy and live with a hope for a prosperous future.

This was something that as soon as early 2008 was thought to be impossible.



:: FRIENDLY ENCOUNTERS :: Sgt. Kevin Dodson, a Fayetteville, N.C., native, scans nearby buildings with a member of the 3rd Battalion, 42nd Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division while on a patrol in the Sadr City district of Baghdad May 20. Dodson serves on the Command Security Detachment for 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

Comrades in Arms make a difference



:: HEALTHY SERVINGS :: An Iraqi Army soldier with the 22nd Battalion, 6th Iraqi Army Division, gives a box of food to an Iraqi woman during a humanitarian aid mission in Ghazaliyah Sept. 6.

among the people, patrolling and interacting with them to help shape a violence free environment.

Sgt. Brandon Griffis, a native of Pendleton, Ind., said he believes the Iraqi Army's best trait is their will to learn.

"Every time we go to their compound and give them classes, they give us their undivided attention," said Griffis, with Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

Soldiers from the brigade's Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, were sent in to reinforce the Iraqis. They came together as one force to eliminate the enemy. Partnered, they stood strong and held off any enemy push.

Their continued presence – mixed with the Strike troops ability to take their knowledge to a higher level through training – within the muhallahs has created a positive change. It truly is a testament to the Iraqi Army's efforts that the people are looking to them for all their security needs, said Capt. Marlon Mallory, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment.

"Our Iraqi counterparts (speak) with local nationals in the area in an effort to gain trust and foster positive relationships for the future," said Mallory. Strike troops will continue to mentor, train and work side-by-side with their Iraqi counterparts until it's determined the Iraqis are capable of controlling the area independently.

Strike troops team with Iraqi Special Forces in ongoing effort in northwest Baghdad

2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

Since arriving in northwest Baghdad in November, the Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), have worked side-by-side with the Iraqi Security Forces in an effort to secure the populace and make way for an economically and self-sustaining Iraq.

Daily, the Strike Soldiers have teamed with Iraqi Army troops from the 22nd and 54th Brigades of the 6th Iraqi Army Division, and patrolled the various muhallahs throughout the region.

It was a likely partnership as Coalition Forces continue to develop and push the Iraqi Army toward a self-sufficient, independent force.

Soldiers of the Strike Brigade have dedicated much of their time and effort to developing

these security forces throughout northwest Baghdad as they trained them on basic medical, weapons and common infantryman tasks – many of the same tasks they may run into while on patrol – and patrolled countless hours through the sewage-strewn streets of Baghdad.

The IA took this training and implied it to their daily patrols where the Iraqi Army troops could be seen



:: CATCHING UP

Sgt. Brandon Griffis, a native of Pendleton, Ind., talks with an Iraqi Army soldier with 2nd Company, 2nd Battalion, 44th Brigade, during a combined patrol in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Hurriyah June 29.

Warrior Soldiers contribute to team

2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.



:: BLAZING GUNS :: Soldiers from Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, prepare to fire the M777A2 Light Weight 155mm Howitzer Jan. 2, 2008 at Camp Taji, Iraq.

2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

The Warriors of the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, embody the Team spirit.

They joined the Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division in December and immediately provided a much-needed capability to the division's war-fighting arsenal.

The use of the Stryker armored vehicle has allowed 2nd SBCT to reach out to areas previously unreachable by other units. Reaching out to these areas was a challenge the units overcame. Many of the areas were austere and were not ready to support the Soldiers, who would be living among the people of Iraq.

The 2nd SBCT's battalions banded together to ensure the Soldiers had what they needed to live and effectively help the people in the towns.

The 2nd SBCT's focus on the "Team" concept was a decisive factor in the impact Warriors had in Iraq.



:: REFLEXIVE TIME :: Soldiers from Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment "On Time," 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division and soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade, Macedonian Army run to the 10-meter line while practicing their reflexive-fire skills April 18.

After arriving and being welcomed into the MND-B team, the brigade expanded its team and welcomed an embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, their Coalition and their Iraqi Security Force partners into their ohana, or Family – a challenging task, but one made easier by

expounding on the Team concept.

Soldiers work side by side with reconstruction specialists and Iraqis daily on projects and missions large and small.

The results, tangible and lasting, are the definition of teamwork.